

B What is claimed is:

~~CLAIMS~~

1. A communications service provision support system which supports multiple different types of services during service sessions,
5 said system when in use comprising a session manager which performs functions generic to each of said multiple different types of services during service sessions;
wherein for each of said multiple types of services, said session manager is arranged during a service session, in which a plurality of participants participate,
10 to generate event messages indicating discrete changes in the session-related status of individual users of the system and to transmit said event messages to an event handler for processing.
2. A system according to claim 2, wherein said event messages include
15 an event message which contains data indicating only one such discrete change.
3. A system according to claim 2, wherein said event messages include a plurality of event messages which each contain data indicating only one such discrete change.
- 20 4. A system according to claim 1, ~~2 or 3~~, wherein said discrete changes include at least one of the following events:
 - i) a user starting a service session,
 - ii) a participant joining an existing service session,
 - 25 iii) a participant suspending participation in an existing service session,

iv) a participant resuming participation in an existing service session,
v) a participant leaving a service session,
vi) a participant inviting another user of the system to join a service session,
5 vii) a participant advertising a service session generally to users of the system inviting those users to join a service session,
viii) a user of the system declining an invitation to join a service session,
ix) a participant withdrawing a general advertisement to users of the system inviting those users to join a service session,
10 x) a service session ending.

5. A system according to ~~any preceding claim~~, wherein said session manager is capable of generating a predetermined set of said event messages for each of said multiple different types of service.

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6. A system according to ~~any preceding claim~~, wherein said event handler comprises a pricing data processor for pricing a participant's usage of a service during a service session.

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7. A system according to claim 6, wherein said pricing processor is arranged to perform service-specific processing of said event messages.

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8. A system according to ~~any preceding claim~~, wherein said event handler comprises a service usage monitor for storing and/or analysing usage of said services over statistically significant numbers of service sessions.

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A 9. A system according to any preceding claim, wherein said event handler comprises a cost data processor for costing a service provided by a third party during a service session.

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A 10. A system according to any preceding claim, wherein said event handler comprises an event message multiplier for copying said event messages and distributing said copied messages to a plurality of event processors.

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A 10 11. A system according to any of claims 1 to 10, comprising said event handler.

12. A method of notifying events occurring during a multi-party service session in a communications service provision support system, said method comprising:

generating a plurality of event messages during a service session in which a plurality of participants participate, each said event message being generated in response to a discrete change in the session-related status of individual users of the system; and

20 transmitting said event messages to an event handler for processing.

13. A method according to claim 12, wherein said event messages are generated in response to a plurality of the following events:

- 25 i) a user starting a service session,
- ii) a participant joining an existing service session,

- iii) a participant suspending participation in an existing service session,
- iv) a participant resuming participation in an existing service session,
- v) a participant leaving a service session,
- vi) a participant inviting another user of the system to join a service session,
- vii) a participant advertising a service session generally to users of the system inviting those users to join a service session,
- viii) a user of the system declining an invitation to join a service session,
- ix) a participant withdrawing a general advertisement to users of the system inviting those users to join a service session,
- x) a service session ending.

14. A method of generating billing records for participation in a service session, in which a plurality of participants participate, provided by a telecommunications system,

said method comprising:

receiving event messages indicating discrete changes in the status of individual participants in said service session; and

generating a plurality of billing records each containing data indicating a
20 charge for a different individual participant's participation in said service session,
wherein a billing record indicating a charge for a particular participant's
participation in said service session includes data derived from discrete changes in
the status of other participants in said service session.

such that the charge indicated for said particular participant is dependent
25 on a change in status of said other participants during said service session.

15. A method according to claim 14, wherein the charge indicated for said particular participant is dependent on the number of other participants in said service session.

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A 16. A method according to claim 14 ~~or 15~~, wherein the billing records indicating charges for said other participants include data derived from discrete changes in the status of said particular participant in said service session,

such that the charges indicated for said other participants are dependent
10 on a change in status of said particular participant.

A 17. A method according to claim 14 ~~or 15~~, wherein the charges indicated for said other participants are dependent only on changes in status of the respective participants for which the billing records are produced.

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A 18. A method according to ^{claim 14} ~~any of claims 14 to 17~~, wherein said discrete changes include, in any combination, one or more of the following:

- i) a user starting a service session,
- ii) a participant joining an existing service session,
- 20 iii) a participant suspending participation in an existing service session,
- iv) a participant resuming participation in an existing service session,
- v) a participant leaving a service session,
- vi) a participant inviting another user of the system to join a service session,

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vii) a participant advertising a service session generally to users of the system inviting those users to join a service session,

viii) a user of the system declining an invitation to join a service session,

ix) a participant withdrawing a general advertisement to users of the system inviting those users to join a service session,

5 x) a service session ending.

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19. A system, or a method, according to ~~any preceding claim~~, which at least three participants participate in said service session.

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